

Message Text

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67

ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 NEA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-07 MC-02 AID-05 IGA-02

EUR-12 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /092 W

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R 091150Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3128

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USCINCEUR

SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T KHARTOUM 3627

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SU

SUBJECT: US MILITARY SALES TO SUDAN

REF: KHARTOUM 3484

1. OTHER SHOE ABOUT TO DROP ON QUESTION F-5E FMS SALES TO SUDAN. DURING AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENTIAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISOR MANSOUR KHALID, DECEMBER 9, LATTER TOOK INITIATIVE IN RAISING ISSUE. HE SAID MINDEF LTGEN BESHIR MOHAMMED ALI (WHO HAS JUST RETURNED FROM PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA) HAD TOLD HIM ARMED FORCES DESIRE PURCHASE ONE SQUADRON HIGH PERFORMANCE AIRCRAFT FROM US AND HAD ASKED HOW MATTER SHOULD BE HANDLED. KHALID COMMENTED THERE HAD BEEN SOME CONSIDERATION EARLY THIS YEAR RE PURCHASE FRENCH AIRCRAFT BUT, AS HE RECALLED THE FIGURES, SQUADRON AMERICAN PLANES WOULD COST SOME \$70 MILLION, VERSUS APPROXIMATELY \$90 MILLION FOR FRENCH EQUIVALENT. MOREOVER, KHALID STRESSED THAT "AT TECHNICAL LEVEL" IN SAG IT WAS FELT THAT ACQUISITION AMERICAN PLANES PREFERABLE, SINCE SAUDIS ALREADY HAVE SOME AND ECONOMIES MIGHT BE ACHIEVED ON TRAINING, SPARES AND SERVICING.

2. AMBASSADOR RECALLED RECENT PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION MADE SUDAN TECHNICALLY ELIGIBLE FOR SUCH REQUEST BUT NOTED SUDANESE INTEREST IN SIX C-130 AIRCRAFT STILL PENDING. ADDITIONALLY, AS KHALID HIMSELF HAD INDICATED, THERE WAS MORE CONCERN IN US OVER

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TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS SYSTEMS THAN

EQUIPMENT WITH MULTI-PURPOSE USES, SUCH AS TRUCKS OR CARGO AIRCRAFT. AS RESULT NEW LEGISLATION, ANY NEW REQUEST OF THIS MAGNITUDE WOULD BE HANDLED AS WAS BEING DONE IN CASE OF C-130S, EVEN IF EXECUTIVE BRANCH APPROVAL OBTAINED, REQUEST WOULD NOW HAVE TO BE REFERRED TO CONGRESS WHICH MUST SIGNIFY "NO OBJECTION" FOR DEAL TO GO THROUGH. KHALID ADMITTED CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES LIKELY BE LESS PREDICTABLE RE FIGHTER AIRCRAFT THAN PENDING C-130 TRANSACTION.

3. KHALID (WHO EXPECTS LEAVE DEC 12 ON LONG DELAYED VISIT TO TEHRAN, KUWAIT, ABU DHABI AND PERHAPS EUROPE) SAID HE WOULD SEE THAT FORMAL REQUEST FOR SQUADRON F-5 AIRCRAFT WAS SENT EMBASSY IN WRITING IN COURSE NEXT FEW DAYS. AMBASSADOR SAID THIS WOULD OF COURSE BE FORWARDED WASHINGTON BUT THERE COULD BE NO COMMITMENT AS TO USG REACTION.

4. SEEMS CLEAR GOS HAS NOW REPEAT NOW RECEIVED FIRM COMMITMENT FOR SAG TO FUND F-5E TRANSACTION. WHILE WE WILL TRANSMIT FORMAL REQUEST WHEN RECEIVED, WOULD APPRECIATE ANY PRELIMINARY GUIDANCE DEPT MAY HAVE AS TO POSSIBLE INTERIM RESPONSE TO KHALID'S APPROACH. BREWER

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